

FRONTISPIECE.



FRONTISPIECE.



intended

THE
SPEAKING FIGURE,

AND THE

AUTOMATON CHESS-PLAYER,

EXPOSED AND DETECTED.

by Philip Thicknesse

NOS HÆC NOVIMUS ESSE NIHIL.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR JOHN STOCKDÅLE,
OPPOSITE BURLINGTON-HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

M DCC LXXXIV.

1784

~~SG 3520.2.15*~~

SG 3675.86*

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
BEQUEST OF
SILAS W. HOWLAND
NOVEMBER 8, 1938

THE
SPEAKING FIGURE,
AND THE
AUTOMATON CHESS-PLAYER,
EXPOSED AND DETECTED.

I HOPE there are few Englishmen so illiberal, as to envy any man, of whatever nation he is born in, or whatever religion he professes, the just reward due to REAL merit or ingenuity; but when I see one Foreigner come among us, and call a Toy-shop Doll, "*a Speaking Figure,*" and demand HALF A CROWN a piece admittance, to hear it, and find within an hundred yards another Foreigner, who imposes double that sum,

to see what he calls an AUTOMATON *Chess-Player* :*—When I see such men, I say, collecting an immense sum of money in this Kingdom, to carry into some other, by mere tricks; tricks inferior to many flights of hand which are shewn for two-pence, my indignation rises at the folly of my own Countrymen, and the arrogance of the imposing strangers. I therefore think it a piece of justice due to both, to draw aside the curtain, open the head, and shew, that the *brains of this wonderful Doll* is nothing more than the continuation of a tin tube, which is fixed to its mouth, so as to convey the Question and Answer to and from an invisible Confederate. That the human voice may be imitated, and many, or most words, articulated by valves, and

* AN AUTOMATON, is a self-moving Engine, with the principle of motion within itself. The flying Dove of *Archytas*, mentioned by *Aulus Gellius*, Noct. At. Lib. x. c. 12, and *Regiomontanus's* Wooden Eagle, which, as *Historians* relate, flew from the City, met the Emperor, saluted him, and returned; and likewise the Iron Fly, which, at a feast, flew out of his hands, and taking a round, returned thither again (Apol. c. x. sect. i.) were properly called AUTOMATA; but the modern Chess-Player is no such thing.

and bellows, like the barrel organ, there is no doubt; but that a mechanical figure can be made to answer all, or any such questions, which are put to it, or even put a question, is UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE. That an AUTOMATON may be made to move its hand, its head, and its eyes, in *certain and regular motions*, is past all doubt; but that an AUTOMATON can be made to move the Chessmen properly, as a *sagacious Player*, in consequence of the *preceding move of a stranger*, who undertakes to play against it, is also UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE: And, therefore, to call it AN AUTOMATON, is an imposition, and merits a public detection; especially as the high price of five shilling for each person's admission, induces the visitor to believe, that its movements are REALLY performed by mechanic powers; when, in fact, the whole delusion is supported in both instances, by invisible confederates. To prove that it is so, is the business of this Publication, not with a view of depriving the Exhibitors of a *reasonable profit*, for their ingenuity;

genuity ; for ingenuity there is in the contrivance of both ; but perhaps less, in the Chess-Player, than even in that of the *Speaking Doll*, which I shall first explain. To do which, it is to be observed, that the Doll (a figure about the size of a very young child) is suspended by a ribband round its waist, in the door-way of a room, or light closet, which is *interior to that into which the company are admitted*. To the mouth of the Doll is fixed a tin tube, about a foot in length, the end of which is formed like the mouth-piece of a speaking trumpet ; and to that mouth-piece the *Questioner* applies his, and in a gentle whisper puts a question to the Doll, in either French, English, German, or Italian : *Quelle age avez vous ?* What age are you ? said I. A faint whispering reply was soon made me ; *J'ai dix-huit ;* I am eighteen. This was a *rational answer* conveyed through the head of an *inanimate being*, and consequently it was made by a rational being ; but how ? it will be said. And where is the rational answer ?

ſwer? If the Frontispiece does not inform the Reader, let him ſuppoſe that in the very large plume of feathers (*out of all proportion to the ſize of the Baby*) upon the head of the Puppet, there is concealed the other end of the trumpet, but more expanded than that to which you put the queſtion :—That there is a hole thro' the ceiling, *over the door-way*, but which is *inviſible* to every body in the *exterior room*; and therefore, whatever words are whiſpered at the mouth-piece below, cannot fail ſtriking the ear of the *proſtrate confederate above*. But as he cannot apply his mouth, as the Queſtioner does, *cloſe* to the counter trumpet in the Baby's head, his reply is not heard by you ſo diſtinctly as he hears the queſtion put; and therefore he often fails, and whiſpers ſome *reply*, but too faintly to be underſtood. It will be ſaid, I know—but the Figure may be taken down, and the reply will be made while it is held in the hands of the Shew-man: It is true; but he holds it in the *ſame place*, and *directly under* the confederate; at which time
 the

the confederate may easily slip a tin tube through the apperture in the ceiling, above a foot or more, to hear the question, and return the reply, without its being seen by the spectators in the front room. The man indeed will tell you, that it will answer a question when hung upon a tree in the Park : But who will regard the declaration of a *Charlatan* ; for the truth is, he will not bring it even into the exterior room ; and the whole deception is, that the *question* and *reply* pass through a tin tube fixed in a head of human form ; for take away that, and hang a double-ended speaking trumpet in the door-way, and then it would appear too idle a deception, to draw the attention of any but children, of its own dimensions.

This is not mere conjecture, but the fact ; for I have fixed a bust of Plaster of Paris in my own house, and can thus carry on the correspondence, in the manner here described. Thus much, therefore, for the *Speaking Figure* ; and as to the *Chefs-Player*, I think, when he
is

is stript of his Turkish robes, turned out of his splendid apartment, deprived of the *serious deportment* of all the parties, and parade of admittance, is still a more simple trick, though better conducted, than the *Speaking Figure*. The Chess-Player, however, is a well executed figure of a Turk, sitting under a kind of tent, and behind a *large Counter*; a Counter which is opened before the *game* begins, and exhibits a complicated piece of clock-work, by which the spectator is *given to understand*, the movements are regulated; but which is nothing more, than one, of many other ingenious devices, to misguide and to delude the observers. Both figure and counter are railed off, and *only one man* attends within side; and he is supposed to be the person with whom the stranger actually plays, by causing the arm and hand of the Automaton to move the Chess-men by some incomprehensible and invisible powers, *according to the preceding move of the stranger who plays against the Automaton*; and that every spectator *should think so*,

B

he

he always places himself close to the right elbow of the Automaton, previous to its move; then puts his left hand into his coat pocket, and by an aukward kind of motion, induces most people to believe, that he has a Magnet concealed in his pocket, by which he can direct the movement of the Turk's arm at pleasure. Add to this, that he has a little cabinet on a side-table, which he now and then unlocks, and locks; a candle burning; and a key to *wind up* the AUTOMATON; all of which are merely to puzzle the spectators: For he takes care that they shall see him move his hand and fingers in his pocket, backwards and forwards, on purpose to enforce the suspicion that *he, not an invisible Agent*, is the antagonist against whom you play; whereas, he is only a party in the deception; and the real mover is concealed in the Counter, which is quite large enough (exclusive of the *clock-work*)* to contain a child of ten, twelve, or fourteen

* Were I to tell a Watch or Clock-maker to make me one or the other, which, at the word of command, would

fourteen years of age; and I have children who could play well at chess, at those ages. The Confederate, therefore, may probably see the moves, by a looking-glass fixed to the ceiling; and has only to practise *reading the game backwards*, for by a Confederate IT IS PERFORMED.

That this is the case, is past all doubt; for they only exhibit the *Automaton Player*, from the hour of one till two o'clock, because the *invisible Player*, cannot bear a longer confinement; if he could, it cannot be supposed that they would not receive Crowns for admittance, from twelve o'clock till four, instead of only from *one to two*. That the visible Attendant means you should consider him the actual Director of the game, and Author of the

B 2 moves,

would point its hour and minute hand at whatever part of the dial I directed, he would tell me, nothing but a *living hand* could so direct it; yet this pretended Automaton does more, for it points both as directed, and adds to it the *human faculties*, by playing with *judgment*, at a game which requires some, though not so much as is generally conceived.

moves, is clear ; because, when I observed to him that he was a good Chefs-Player, he instantly replied, *la, la* ; so, so ; but I am confident he is not : Nay, I have no doubt but it is a living hand which is put into the sleeve of the Turk, and that all the moves are made by that means.* Indeed, Mons. Kemplin (who is certainly a very ingenious man) had the candour to say to a CERTAIN PRINCE, at Paris, who asked him the secret, “ *Quand vous le saurez, mon Prince, ce ne sera plus rien.*” Both these deceptions have been shewn at Paris ; and I can no better prove, that what is here said is well founded, than by giving an extract from a very well written Letter on the subject, by an ingenious Frenchman of that City.

“ Anfin,” says he, “ on montre actuellement, sur les Boulevards un poupée qui parle
“ sans

* I saw the ermine trimmings of the Turk’s outer garment move once or twice, when the Figure should have been quite motionless ; for it is the *left* arm alone which moves ; and he is made to play left-handed, probably that it may appear right-handed to the accomplice in the looking-glass, above ; though I rather think, the invisible player sees all the moves through the hair trimmings of the Turk’s habit.

“ sans remuer les lèvres, sans respirer et sans
 “ le secours du plus petit ressort ; et que non
 “ seulement parle, mais encore fait des questions
 “ très capcieuses, et même des jolis Madri-
 “ gaux. On les suspend en l'air avec des ru-
 “ bands, pour prouver qu'elle ne tient à
 “ aucune mécanique ; on la prend même entre les
 “ mains, et ce qui peut encore augmenter le
 “ merveilleux, c'est qu'en suspendant une
 “ pantoufle à la place de la poupée, on n'en-
 “ tend pas moins les questions capcieuses et les
 “ petits Madrigaux. Il suffit seulement de ne
 “ pas quitter la chambre où s'opère le miracle,
 “ car par-tout ailleurs la poupée est muette.
 “ *Cette bagatelle qui attire la populace, fait*
 “ honneur au Physicien très distingué qui la
 “ protège, et prouve qu'il connoît les effets
 “ d'un tuyau et d'une parabole ménagés dans
 “ un plafond ; il falloit seulement qu'il inti-
 “ tulât cette pièce, *Machine d'Acoustique et non*
 “ *de Mécanique*. M. M. les commis du Journal
 “ de Paris, ont bien senti cela dans l'annonce
 “ qu'ils en ont faite : Ils ont mieux aimé
 “ l'appeller *merveille que mécanique* ; fondés sur
 “ cet

“ cet axiome que *qui prouve trop ne prouve*
 “ *rien* : Effectivement une poupée qui fait des
 “ questions est plus merveilleuse que les ma-
 “ chines humaines qui vent l’admirer, puisque
 “ celle-ci ne font rien qu’en vertu de leur or-
 “ ganisation, et que d’après les loix générales
 “ du mouvement, fondès que la poupée parle
 “ et fait ventendre sa Pensée, sans différer en
 “ rien des poupées qu’on vend à la foire.
 “ Quand j’ai dit que cell-ci n’avoit pas de
 “ ressorts, je me suis pourtant trompè ; elle en
 “ a un, qui tend à détourner l’attention pub-
 “ lique des *tetes-parlantes* de M. L’Abbè
 “ Mical.”

Now this very *Speaking Figure*, exhibited
 here, is the very same which was shewn upon the
Boulevards at Paris ; a place somewhat similar
 to our Bartholomew-Fair ; and where the utmost
 that was given to see it, was three or four *sous* ;
 but here in England, half-a-crown is exacted,
 to see a Plaster of Paris Doll, hung up in a
 door-way, by a bit of ribband, with a small
 speaking trumpet which goes through the
 head

head, and opens amidst a plume of feathers behind !* And I was one of the many who have paid fifteen shillings to shew my family the figure of a Turk, which has a moveable arm, a thumb, and two clumsy fingers, which, by pulling a string within the arm, can embrace or leave a Chess-man, just where *a living hand directs it*. Let the Exhibitor, therefore, call it a GOOD DECEPTION, and I will subscribe to the truth of it ; but while he draws a large sum of money from us, under the *assurances of its being an Automaton* that moves by mechanic powers, he endeavours to deceive, and it is fair game to expose it, that the price at least may be reduced. For I confess it is a curiosity, and I believe as much money would be received at one shilling each, as is gained, by demanding five. What has given rise to these two impositions, the *Speaking Figure* and the Chess-playing Turk, is, that Mons. l'Abbe Mical, of Paris, has actually made two colossal heads, which

* The Publisher can name several Gentlemen of Character, who have seen this experiment proved at the Author's house.

which speak certain words distinctly, and which is really the production of many years labour : They are not, says the Parisian Writer,—
*“ L'ouvrage du moment & du hazard, c'est le fruit
 “ du travail & du genie, depuis trente ans.”*—
 Forty years since, I found three hundred people assembled, to see, at a shilling each, a coach which went without horses ; and though this coach was moved by a man within side of a wheel, ten feet diameter, and which moved the small fore-wheels, just as the crane wheel raises the goods from ships on the quay, Mr. Quin, the Duke of Arhol, and many persons present, were angry with me, for saying it was trod round by a man within the hoop, or hinder wheels ; but a small paper of snuff, put into the wheel, soon convinced every person present, that it could not only move, but sneeze too, *perfectly like a Christian*. That machine was not a wheel within a wheel, but a Man within a wheel : The *Speaking Figure* is a man in a closet above, and the Automaton Chess-Player is *a man within a man* ; for whatever his outward form be composed of, he bears a living soul within.

CON-

C O N C L U S I O N.

TO shew the utter impossibility that any part of the *Chess-Playing Turk* is performed by mechanical powers, and that every part is performed by a living, but invisible human confederate, let it be remembered, first, that the success of the game at Chess depends wholly on address, and cautious movements of the Chess-men, in various and *undetermined* moves, on a board, containing sixty-four squares, (*or houses.*) When the men are disposed, the game is generally begun by the *pawns*, which march straight forward in their own file, *one house* at a time, except the first move; for then they may advance *two houses*, but they never move backwards: The manner that they take their adversary's men is *side-ways*, in the next *house* forwards; where, having captivated the enemy, they move forward as before. The rook goes forward, or

C

cross-

which speak certain words distinctly, and which is really the production of many years labour : They are not, says the Parisian Writer,—
*“ L'ouvrage du moment & du hazard, c'est le fruit
 “ du travail & du genie, depuis trente ans.”*—
 Forty years since, I found three hundred people assembled, to see, at a shilling each, a coach which went without horses ; and though this coach was moved by a man within side of a wheel, ten feet diameter, and which moved the small fore-wheels, just as the crane wheel raises the goods from ships on the quay, Mr. Quin, the Duke of Athol, and many persons present, were angry with me, for saying it was trod round by a man within the hoop, or hinder wheels ; but a small paper of snuff, put into the wheel, soon convinced every person present, that it could not only move, but sneeze too, *perfectly like a Christian*. That machine was not a wheel within a wheel, but a Man within a wheel : The *Speaking Figure* is a man in a closet above, and the Automaton Chess-Player is *a man within a man* ; for whatever his outward form be composed of, he bears a living soul within.

CON-

C O N C L U S I O N.

TO shew the utter impossibility that any part of the *Chefs-Playing Turk* is performed by mechanical powers, and that every part is performed by a living, but invisible human confederate, let it be remembered, first, that the success of the game at Chefs depends wholly on address, and cautious movements of the Chefs-men, in various and *undetermined* moves, on a board, containing sixty-four squares, (*or houses.*) When the men are disposed, the game is generally begun by the *pawns*, which march straight forward in their own file, *one house* at a time, except the first move; for then they may advance *two houses*, but they never move backwards: The manner that they take their adversary's men is *side-ways*, in the next *house* forwards; where, having captivated the enemy, they move forward as before. The rook goes forward, or

C

cross-

cross-ways, through the whole file, and back again. The Knight skips backwards and forwards to the next *house*, save one, of a different colour, with a sideling march, or slope; and thus kills his enemies that fall in his way; or guards his friends that may be exposed on that side. The Bishop walks always in the same colour of the field which he is placed in at first, forward, or backward, aslope or diagonally, as far as he pleases. The Queen's walk is more universal, as she takes all the steps of the fore-mentioned pieces, excepting that of the Knight; and as to the King's motion, it is in *one house at a time*, and that in *any direction*: Among the *various men* which compose this EASTERN GAME, (for it was played in Persia, 576 years before the Christian æra) no man bears the name of a Fox; and therefore, however near *the house of a Fox may be to the King*, he need not enter that house while he has so many better to move in. It is therefore time to have done with all *those Moving and Speaking Figures*; and never to forget, that a drunken
man

man is always acting the part of a sober one ; and that he who *pretends to be better and wiser than his neighbour*, is in general, *by all that*, so much the worse. And I would sooner believe the Right Honourable Charles James Fox is only an AUTOMATON, than that the other Turk, in St. James's-street, could, without confederates, play a game, more complicated than was ever played by any man, except that *game played* for the last twenty years by the Right Honourable Lord North, of ***** memory. Man, the *cunningest*, the most artful, and the most ingenious of all animals, is always aiming to deceive, and to draw the attention of those who behold his *movements*, from that *point* at which he means most to deceive.

Look here, Ladies and Gentlemen, says the the flight-of-hand-man ? Every body *looks as he bids them ; at his right hand*, while his left, slips unobserved, the *Guinea piggs* into a bag : The discarded Minister is for a *Reform*, and *shorter Duration* of Parliaments.

“ The

"The Devil was sick—the Devil a Monk would be ;

"The Devil was well—the Devil a Monk was he."

So there is good reason to believe, that *Monf. Automaton's* robes and hair trimmings do not meet so close as to prevent an *interior man* from seeing the Chess-Board, though he may not be seen himself. For, as I observed above, I saw motion there, when the Figure ought to have been, and would have been motionless, had there not been *some life* very near it. When the arm of the *Automaton* moves, all eyes are *there*; and therefore, the eyes of the concealed mover lies hid, like a hair in her form.

F I N I S,

}

This Day is Published,

STOCKDALE'S EDITION
OF
SHAKSPEARE;

INCLUDING,
IN ONE VOLUME,
THE WHOLE OF HIS
DRAMATIC WORKS;

WITH
EXPLANATORY NOTES,
COMPILED FROM
VARIOUS COMMENTATORS.
Embellished with a striking Likeness of the AUTHOR.

"Nature her pencil to his hand commits,

"And then in all her forms to this great Master fits."

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR JOHN STOCKDALE,
OPPOSITE BURLINGTON-HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

M,DCC,LXXXIV.

STOCKDALE'S EDITION OF SHAKSPEARE.

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

A new edition of SHAKSPEARE, and an edition of so singular a form as the present, in which all his plays are comprehended in one volume, will, perhaps, appear surprising to many readers; but, upon a little reflection, their surprize will, the Editor doubts not, be converted into approbation.

Much as SHAKSPEARE has been read of late years, and largely as the admiration and study of him have been extended, there is still a numerous class of men to whom he is very imperfectly known. Many of the middling and lower ranks of the inhabitants of this country are either not acquainted with him at all, excepting by name, or have only seen a few of his plays, which have accidentally fallen in their way. It is to supply the wants of these persons that the present edition is principally undertaken; and it cannot fail of becoming to them a perpetual source of entertainment and instruction. That they will derive the highest entertainment from it, no one can deny; for it does not require any extraordinary degree of knowledge or education to enter into the general spirit of SHAKSPEARE. The passions he describes are the passions which are felt by every human being; and his wit and humour are not local, or confined to the customs of a particular age, but are such as will give pleasure at all times, and to men of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest.

But the instruction that may be drawn from SHAKSPEARE is equal to the entertainment which his writings afford

STOCKDALE'S EDITION OF SHAKSPEARE.

afford. He is the greatest master of human nature, and of human life, that, perhaps, ever existed; so that we cannot peruse his works without having our understandings considerably enlarged. Besides this, he abounds in occasional maxims and reflections, which are calculated to make a deep impression upon the mind. There is scarcely any circumstance in the common occurrences of the world, on which something may not be found peculiarly applicable in SHAKSPEARE; and at the same time, better expressed than in any other author. To promote, therefore, the knowledge of him, is to contribute to general improvement.

Nor is the utility of the present publication confined to persons of the rank already described; it will be found serviceable even to those whose situation in life hath enabled them to purchase all the expensive editions of our great dramatist. The book now offered to the public may commodiously be taken into a coach or a post chaise, for amusement in a journey; or if a company of gentlemen should happen, in conversation, to mention SHAKSPEARE, or to dispute concerning any particular passage, a volume containing the whole of his plays may, with great convenience, be fetched by a servant out of a library or a closet. In short, any particular passage may, at all times, and with ease, be recurred to. It is a compendium, not an abridgement, of the noblest of our poets, and a library in a single volume.

The Editor hath endeavoured to give all the perfection to this work which the nature of it can admit. The account of his life, which is taken from Rowe, and his last will, in reality,

STOCKDALE'S EDITION OF SHAKSPEARE,

reality, comprehend almost every thing that is known with regard to the personal history of SHAKSPEARE. The anxious researches of his admirers have scarcely been able to collect any farther information concerning him.

The text, in the present edition, is given as it has been settled by the most approved commentators. It does not consist with the limits of the design, that the notes should be large, or very numerous; they have not, however, been wholly neglected. The notes which are subjoined are such as were necessary for the purpose of illustrating and explaining obsolete words, unusual phrases, old customs, and obscure or distant allusions. In short, it has been the Editor's aim to omit nothing which may serve to render SHAKSPEARE intelligible to every capacity, and to every class of readers.

Having this view, he cannot avoid expressing his hope, that an undertaking, the utility of which is so apparent, will be encouraged by the public; and his confidence of a favourable reception is increased by the consciousness that he is not doing an injury to any one. The success of the present volume will not impede the sale of the larger editions of SHAKSPEARE, which will still be equally sought for by those to whom the purchase of them may be convenient.